



02143

City of Somerville

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

City Hall 3rd Floor, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA

JUNE 8, 2021 MEETING MINUTES

This meeting was conducted via remote participation on GoToWebinar.

NAME	TITLE	STATUS	ARRIVED
Sarah Lewis	Co-Chair	<i>Present</i>	
Luisa Oliveira	Co-Chair	<i>Present</i>	
Frank Valdes	Member	<i>Present</i>	
Deborah Fennick	Member	<i>Present</i>	
Andrew Arbaugh	Member	<i>Present</i>	
Tim Talun	Member	<i>Present</i>	

The meeting was held via GoToWebinar and was called to order by Co-Chair, Sarah Lewis at 6:05pm and adjourned at 9:52pm.

PUBLIC MEETING: 74 Middlesex: Building

(continued from May 25, 2021)

Tim Talun recused himself.

The applicant team started by stating that they had three items to discuss based on the Commission's feedback; the façade options, the penthouse, and the bike room.

The applicant team changed their preference for the façade cladding to Option 2. In the preferred option, the Vertical Fold, the folds carry down to the ground. The preferred penthouse design is the Shingled Option; which has more distinctive shadow lines with texture that defines the top. The bike room is proposed to be a hub for cycling and arrival from the West. The bikes are the vertical display on the wall visible from the Civic Space; which uses the bikes as art, as well as parking and a workshop.

The Commissioners and the applicant team discussed how the bike room is separated from the rest of the lobby features, the possibility of opening the wall up into the bike room as an entryway, the updated penthouse materiality and design, the façade cladding change and floor edge, and the color palette choices.

Following a motion by Member Arbaugh, seconded by Member Valdes, the Commission voted unanimously (3-0) to recommend the preferred penthouse shingle design.

Following a motion by Member Fennick, seconded by Member Valdes, the Commission voted unanimously (3-0) to recommend the preferred vertical fold façade cladding design.

Following a motion by Member Valdes, seconded by Member Fennick, the Commission voted (2-1) to recommend that the design guidelines have been met, but applicant should further explore the bike room as it has not met the active use requirements and needs further investigation as a program element, which should be added as a condition to Planning Board approval. The Commission requested that a material palette be provided for review prior to the issuance of a Building Permit. The Commission also requested a material mockup panel.

RESULT:**RECOMMENDED****PUBLIC MEETING: 74 Middlesex: Civic Space***(continued from May 25, 2021)*

The applicant team walked the Commission through the design revisions of the Civic Space. They reduced the width of emergency access plaza to 20ft, widened the shared bike and pedestrian path, removed the trees and benches along the bike/pedestrian path, and opened up the tree grove with the building landscaping. The applicant team also shared cross sections of the Civic Space.

The Commissioners and the applicant team discussed the updated tree grove, the colorful details, the paver materials, and adding seating at the corners of the Kensington Connection. They also discussed the separation of the building seating area and the Civic Space and how to make the entire space feel more cohesive, adding permanent seating options, and using the same paving options in the lobby and the Civic Space.

Following a motion by Member Arbaugh, seconded by Member Valdes, the Commission voted unanimously (3-0) to recommend that the guidelines for a through block plaza have been met.

Following a motion by Member Arbaugh, seconded by Member Fennick, the Commission voted unanimously (3-0) to recommend that the project move forward with the feedback given incorporated and with the revisions shared with the UDC before it moves on to the Planning Board regarding the connections between the building and Civic Space.

RESULT:**RECOMMENDED****PUBLIC MEETING: 599 Somerville Ave**

Tim Talun rejoined the meeting.

The applicant team presented the proposal for a neighborhood-scale Commercial Building in the MR3 District with 43,200 square feet that will be striving for a LEED Gold certification. The applicant team described the scale of the building in comparison to the neighborhood as a whole. They took to heart the design as two distinct buildings and integration of the ground floor uses. The western wall has to be a fire-rated party wall, but they imagined that it will be an art installation, like elsewhere in SomerNova, until the neighboring property is developed.

The applicant team walked the Commission through the building façade design concepts. Option 1 has punched opening brick with vertical columns and glass. Option 2 has more of a traditional industrial approach with grid windows and a flat iron corner. Option 3 has more of a turn of the century metal SoHo type look. The applicant then showed an overall site plan.

The team's landscape architect discussed the building landscaping which will incorporate a 12' sidewalk split into a 6' walking and furnishing zone, plus a parklet at the corner. A green roof and a landscape buffer will be incorporated into the design. The landscaping plan is expected to exceed the Green Score, with a score of 0.31.

The Commission and the applicant team discussed the location for the proposed local art and specifically what art will be there, the height of the penthouse, and the below grade parking for vehicles and bikes. They also discussed the façade options, the option of shifting the division of the two sections of the building, the space between the two sections of the building, and the details of the landscape plan.

Following a motion by Member Fennick, seconded by Member Valdes, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to recommend Façade Option 1, with a more natural color palate similar to Option3, and explore the location of the division of the two sections of the building.

The applicant team will come back with revised designs at a future meeting.

RESULT:

CONTINUED

PUBLIC MEETING: 15 McGrath Highway

Andrew Arbaugh recused himself.

The applicant team started by noting that this project had received a series of Hardship Variances at a previous Zoning Board of Appeals meeting due to site constraints.

The applicant team presented three building massing options; Horizon, Gateway, and Jewel Box. Jewel box is preferred massing concept; it brings the scale down to respect the mid-rise building on the adjacent site and also allows a breakage of the larger mass into two planes in the front and back.

Three façade options were presented; White Precast Panels, Staggered Metals, and Expressed Metal Grid. Staggered Metals, the preferred façade concept, gives the façade some movement and depth.

The applicant team shared the landscaping plan and ideas. They will have further discussions with PSUF to develop the plans further. They also described the pedestrian circulation throughout site and building and the ground floor plan.

The Commission and the applicant team discussed the Jewel Box massing, altering the materiality of the “jewel box” section of the building to create a more distinct element, and the façade options.

Following a motion by Member Fennick, seconded by Member Valdes, the Commission voted unanimously (3-0) to recommend the Jewel Box Massing Option.

The applicant team will come back with revised designs at a future meeting.

RESULT:

CONTINUED

GENERAL BUSINESS: Meeting Minutes Approval

Following a motion by Member Valdes, seconded by Member Talun, the Commission voted unanimously (3-0) to approve the minutes from February 23, 2021; March 9, 2021; March 23, 2021, April 13, 2021 and April 27, 2021.

NOTICE: These minutes constitute a summary of the votes and key discussions at this meeting. To review a full recording, please contact the Planning & Zoning Division at planning@somervillema.gov.